

Extra Chapter - Guardian Magician Fitts

Part 1

I was already midair when I regained consciousness.

"Eek?"

The wind carried off my voice immediately.

Falling from a terrifying height, it felt as I would never stop.

Because of the air pressure, even breathing was a challenge. My body broke through one cloud after another.

A horrible fright coursed through my body.

"Ahh!"

A terrifying scream arose from the depth of my throat.

Even knowing it's my own scream, it felt as from someone else instead.

A scream that further drilled into my mind the reality of the situation.

Don't know how, but I am in the air and falling.

"AHH... Aghh!"

If I don't think of something, I'm going to die.

--I'll die.

I'm definitely gonna die. Falling leads to death. Even I know that.

And I know that the ground is getting closer and closer.

"Ughhhh!"

Driven by fear, I released all my magic power. It's wind, I made wind. I directed the wind to blow directly against me from below. Because someone once told me that birds flew in the sky by riding the wind. Who? Who was it?

I slowed slightly - but quickly I fell back to the original speed.

So wind's no good. That person also taught me, even though birds flew by riding the wind, men could never do the same, no matter how strong the breeze. Who? Who was it?

So what should I do in this situation?

What did "he" say? The person that taught me various things, what would he say?

Quick, think, hurry.

Hadn't he said before? The method for flying? He said it was impossible. Man cannot fly. Not under our own power, flying is impossible without tools. He had tried to fly, but ultimately was unsuccessful. He thought that he flew but failed, landing on something soft.

That's right! Soft things could cushion the blow, so make something soft cover my body.

But soft? And, how to make it?

I don't know I don't know I don't know!

What do I do? What do I do? What do I do?

I tried to create water around my body, but the wind quickly blew it away.

Then I create wind to push me upwards, but he already said it won't work.

What about earth..? I don't know how to make use of that!

Then fire... wind... water? Earth? So confusing! I don't know what to do!

"Ah!"

My head hit the ground.

Part 2

"Uggh!"

A silver haired boy screamed as he sat himself back up.

Around ten, his childish face distorted with terror.

"Haa... Haa.."

The boy took a deep breath, then checked all over his body with his hands. Then pulled hard on his own hair as if to tear them out, all to confirm that he's still in one piece.

"... Ah? Ehh?"

Checking his surroundings, he suddenly realized he's no longer midair, instead sitting on a soft bed.

"Phew..."

Covering his face with his hands, he finally exhaled in assurance.

"Hey, Fitts, you alright?"

The voice came from above.

Another boy was looking upside down from the top bunk. While not yet adult, he was already a handsome gentleman capable of every maiden's heart... Or so the boy named Luke claimed.

"You're sleep talking again, sounded rough, that dream again?"

"Em, yeah.."

The boy named Fitts ambivalently nodded in response.

Suddenly, he suddenly felt something off in his lower half. Uncertain, Fitts looked down and realized how moist it was.

Extending a hand to feel it, he finally realized how soaked his bottom pajamas

and rest of beddings became. Still warm.

"Agh.."

Fitts hurriedly pulled his blanket back on, in a vain attempt to hide it from Luke, but it was too late.

Luke already saw everything.

"Wooo.. Woooowoo...."

With teary eyes Fitts looked at Luke, full of remorse.

"Sorry... I'm so sorry..."

"Don't apologize to me."

Luke crawled down from his bunk, sighed, and scratched the back of his head.

"Nobody will blame you."

"But... But I'm... so old already... and I still... wet my bed..."

"You're not the only person that experienced horrors that day."

Luke said that with hunched shoulders, his face stern.

In his voice, an honest attempt at comfort.

"Besides, there're plenty others here that wet their beds. The maids are used to it by now. So hurry up, go change and let laundry take care of the sheets. Ariel-sama is waiting on us."

Luke left the room with those words.

Still wiping away tears, Fitts crawled off his soaked bedding, before wearing the sunglasses besides him.

Part 3

Fitts was a victim of Fittoa Region Disappearance Event.

He was teleported midair.

Suddenly thrusted several hundred meters up, he naturally fell.

But unlike others, Fitts was a magician.

Not a typical magician either. Even though merely ten, under the tutelage of an excellent teacher Fitts was well versed in all intermediate magic, and some knowledge of advanced magic, even capable of chantless incantation.

Struggling in the air, he somehow managed to slow down sufficiently before hitting the ground and miraculously survived the landing with just broken legs.

Calling it a crash landing wouldn't be unreasonable. Regardless, after sticking the landing and exhausted in magic, Fitts lost consciousness.

When he woke up, he already lost everything.

His village, his family, his home.

So young and already homeless. In that moment, a special someone took note of this Fitts that had nowhere to go and no one to rely on. The Second Princess of Asura Kingdom, Ariel Anemoi Asura.

She appreciated the value in Fitts's chantless magic and employed him.

As result, Fitts began his life in the palace as the Second Princess Guardian Magician.

"Hello... Oh, it's Luke and Fitts, good morning."

As Guardian Magician, his work began when Ariel's up.

In the morning, he must wake up the princess by certain time.

This type of work was usually reserved for the maids, but because of the

frequent assassination attempts since her youth, it's no longer left to outsiders, but instead reserved for Guardian Knight Luke or Guardian Magician Fitts.

As a palace outsider, they could be confident that he had no dealings with anti-Ariel nobles, so Fitts was given that responsibility.

"Good morning, Ariel-sama."

Of course, there's punishment if he woke up later than the princess... According to the rules, but so far Fitts had not been admonished for waking up late.

"What a nice morning... Luke, what appointments have we arranged for today?"

Ariel stretched lazily as she left her bed and sat herself in front of dressing table.

Fitts stood behind the princess to help wash her face and comb her hair.

"After breakfast, meeting with Sir Datyan and Sir Klein in the morning, the contents of which being---"

Luke briefly covered the purpose of the meeting, behind Fitts quickly but carefully helped the princess with her hair.

"In the afternoon, meeting with Lord Philemon. Dinner will be---"

"Strange for you to say that... isn't he your father, Luke?"

"I was warned to keep family and business separate."

After her hairstyle took shape, Ariel stood up and stretched her arms wide up to shoulder height.

Seeing the princess' actions, Fitts quickly helped her remove her garment. Although also normally a job for the maids, this had became a habit of Ariel from youth.

With the smooth, snow white skin underneath making his heart race, Fitts rushed to dress Ariel with what the maids had prepared for her.

A sophisticated design, seemingly a challenge to wear.

But Fitts helped Ariel change with practiced motions.

When he just got started, Fitts didn't know how to dress her properly.

Only recently did he get the hang of it.

After plenty of practice, even a country pumpkin hailing from Fittoa Region could learn.

"Fitts... wrong button."

"Eh? Ah... Right, I'm sorry."

Just as he was thinking that, Ariel pointed out a mistake.

He rushed to fix it, but couldn't figure out what went wrong. For this type of outfit, one mistake and the whole thing became a mess.

"What's wrong? I'll catch a cold if I stay undressed."

"Ah... Yes! Just a moment!"

"Or are you stealing another glance at me?"

"No... Not even!"

Seeing the quick refusal by the blushing Fitts, Ariel giggled.

She particularly loved to toy with Fitts' innocence.

"Don't mind me, I'm just enjoying myself."

Whenever that happens, Luke was always there to lend a hand.

With a gentle smile, Luke pointed Fitts to his mistake.

"Yikes, Luke. You dare to lust after your master? If so, how improper, you ought to be punished!"

"How horrifying, so what shall be my punishment?"

"I'm taking your desserts."

"Oh so cruel, your highness... but the master's wishes are my command."

As those two chattered away, Fitts finally finished helping Ariel into her dress.

Ariel twirled once to confirm nothing amiss, and to psyche herself up for the day.

"Good work. Now then, shall we have breakfast?"

"Yes!"

Ariel, with Luke a step behind, headed out the room.

Fitts followed suit, but caught in the process his own reflection over the dressing mirror.

In the mirror stood a gloomy boy with sunglasses.

He stopped in his step and twirled in a finger a strand of short, white hair.

Only for a moment, soon Fitts turned away from the mirror. Following Ariel, he left the room.

Part 4

Well Then.

About this boy magician named Fitts that suddenly popped up in the palace, many among the nobility had some choice words.

"Even though the Magic Guild had plenty of excellent candidates..."

Of unknown family and origin. Only things distinguishing were his race and hair color.

Based on his lack of manners and proper etiquette, his commoner background was obvious to see.

Yet despite all that, Princess Ariel chose the boy as her new Guardian Magician. She even rewarded him with magic equipments of the highest grades and demanded him by her side at all times.

Such special accommodation caused a great deal of resentment among the palace nobles.

"Say, what's up with those sunglasses?"

"Yeah, he seem ignorant of how disrespectful it is wearing that."

The boy always wore a pair of sunglasses. Of course, within the palace keeping one's face hidden without reason was considered a grave breach of etiquette.

Naturally the nobles would criticize such faux pas.

But Ariel had already gained exemption from the king himself for Fitts' sunglasses.

In truth, the sunglasses was a magic item that could instantly detect threats to Ariel's life. "Since that has had happened before..." The King gave permission for it.

"It's just the sunglasses that got the palace maids hot and bothered."

"You have to admit, standing besides Luke, they make a beautiful scene together."

"Apparently, the maids took great pleasure in seeing the normally womanizing Luke taking great care of the boy."

"The palace morales are under threat."

"You can't threat what never existed."

Hahah... The aristocrats shared a hearty laugh.

The Fitts who was always a step behind Ariel, even hidden by those sunglasses his handsome appearance was plain to see. Many had suffered terrific delusions after sight of the trio walking about.

"I understand, since they're both boys of the same age, but it's really hard to get my head around it."

"Huh? What do you mean?"

"The Luke who would occasionally declare his love of women and hate of men, would suddenly took such liking to the boy."

"Oh, I see. That is the case."

"No, it's not too strange, even a man like Luke could learn to appreciate the charm of male beauty."

"I suppose, hahah."

For Asura nobility, there's nothing unusual about homosexuality.

Because there're plenty among them with even more perverse inclination, boy-love was minor in comparison, nothing to be shocked by.

"Still, I do wonder where Ariel-sama found that boy."

"Indeed, since Ariel-sama recommended him so eagerly... maybe a bastard of someone higher up?"

"Oh? Do you have an inkling?"

"Indeed. Several years ago, I visited a cousin at Fittoa Region. That cousin told me that he was invited to tenth birthday party for Lord Sauros' granddaughter."

"Ohh, was the granddaughter the famed red monkey princess of House Boreas?"

"The very same, she was the one rumored to had been expelled for beating up classmates. A hopeless girl-monkey that can't be trained, even in proper greetings."

"So what about that monkey princess?"

"According to my cousin, the monkey princess changed. Not only did she observed proper etiquette in her greetings, she was quiet and elegant, even her dance was brilliant."

"Maybe the rumors were greatly exaggerated, certainly you can't train a monkey to dance."

"No, that wasn't it at all. When my cousin made audience with Lord Sauros, it was Sauros himself that boasted about it."

"What did he say?"

"That the girl's instructor was a boy two years her younger."

"I see... the age does match."

"Considering how much Sauros showered the boy with praise, my cousin went on to speculate, 'perhaps he's a boy of your bloodline?'"

"Ohh?"

"Of course Sauros did not admit to it, but equally puzzling was, he didn't exactly deny it either."

"I see. What you're implying is, that genius youth was...?"

"Quite possible."

"Compared to commoners, he does have some appreciation for etiquette, and this was the cause?"

Suddenly, one of the nobles thought of something.

"Say, is he strong?"

According to Princess Ariel, Fitts had dexterity not inferior to a knight, well

versed in both math and language, in magic his understanding was superior even to the instructors in Magic Academy. He could even use chantless incant advanced magic.

And he's only ten.

"Certainly, she exaggerated."

"Surely the princess would not let a random halfwit hang around her."

"Well... How about we go find out? Would be interesting to see if the boy's the real deal..."

"I must advise you not. What if he's for reals and retaliates in kind?"

"You're right... In any case, if he's going to stay on as Guardian Magician, he better brushes up on palace etiquettes."

"Yes, such inelegance is hard to watch."

As such, even though the nobles had their reservations about Fitts, none dared to approach him, only merely observed at a distance and complaint behind his back.

Of course, this was exactly as Ariel had intended.

Part 5

"Shall we arrange for Sir Tink's son in the Knights?"

"Yes, his strength is in arithmetics, so arrange for him to apprentice in Knights' accounting department."

Later in the afternoon.

Ariel and Luke's father, Philemon Notos Greyrat, held a meeting.

Philemon was the highest noble of Ariel's faction. Even though he had poor judgement, from youth he already shouldered the responsibility as lord of Milbotts Region.

As soon as something comes up, he would come to discuss how to proceed with Ariel.

The number of people in Ariel's ranks were few in number.

Because Ariel was still young, although supported by will of the people, among the nobility she lacked widespread support.

As such, they're still at the stage of courting the aristocracy.

The upper nobles with real power that supported the First or Second Prince were unlikely to switch camp to Ariel's, so they're forced to carve out their own niche.

That's why Philemon suggest that they go after those on the fence.

Go after the regional nobles disconnected from the struggle in the capital instead, as well as the more capable ones among the middle and lower nobles.

With Philemon's backing, promote this group into the central government, or arrange for talents into key positions.

A long term strategy designed to blossom ten, twenty years down the line.

A decade later, with Ariel's followers well positioned, even if they failed to rise through the ranks, they'd never-the-less be important assets.

"The Knighthood, Magic Guild, Palace Guards, Urban Cohorts... Looks like we have covered most of our bases now."

"Hard to tell right now how the seeds we planted would sprout. They could very well be eliminated before they could root if detected."

They decided that their first step was to build up their military strength.

In this peaceful era, armies and knights held little value. Internally, at most they would be deployed to repell magical beasts or suppress banditry. Albeit harsh, calling these units politically neutered wouldn't be far from the truth.

As result, these units had been largely ignored by the other factions. Certainly the heads of each organization had their own inclinations, but for bunk of the force the political machines hadn't bothered to meddled with yet.

But they're the first responders if something was to happen.

Asura Kingdom had a long period without civil strife. Even assassination attempts would be brushed under the rug by the lack of evidence. As such, much of the aristocracy had forgotten the phrase "military is might".

That's also why Ariel and Philemon chose to focus here.

"Taking such a tedious, roundabout path certainly made one anxious."

"It's as you say..."

Philemon was the head of Notos Greyrats. Compared to other Greyrat branches, he's lacking in seniority, wealth, and respect.

Ariel was in a similar predicament. Even though as part of the royal family she could spent freely, but her vulnerability among the candidates were plain for all to see. Her only advantage was in the will of the people.

But popular support is a finicky thing.

Their hearts could easily be swayed by actions of other princes, too unreliable as bastion of support to rely on, when the chips are down.

With whom did Ariel wished to go to war with, and for what purpose?

"But right now, consolidate our bases is the only realistic course of action, your highness."

"You're right, I understand. To obtain the crown, I must take the long road..."

That's right, it's because Ariel made her mind for the crown.

As such, she's taking her first steps on the path for the throne.

Let the palace throngs waste their attention on Fitts, thus allowing Ariel herself to freely commingle with nobles for support, and quietly began her political struggle. The scaredy cat princess whose rushing to protect herself from a recent assassination attempt. Using that as her cover she hid her fangs and stepped boldly forth.

In order to fulfill what her deceased Guardian Magician Derrick Redbat had behest in her.

"..."

Protecting the conducts of these two were two others standing guard.

Luke and Fitts.

They did not involve themselves in the discussion, instead stood in silence.

Any adventurer or merchant that know their stuff would help but sigh at mere sight of them.

Boots that allow the wearer to run several times faster than normal, [Gale Boots].

A cloak that regulates body temperature and prevents heat stroke, [Cloak of Perpetual Warmth].

Gauntlets that halve all damage received on the palm, [Overwhelming Gloves].

All of these articles were magic items of the highest grade.

Beyond these, Luke also wore a sword endowed with magic for easily cut through iron shields, "Steel Cutting Sword".

All these weapons and armors of highest grade were given to them by Ariel as reward of their past service.

The one exception, was the wand Fitts wore on his waist.

A small baton sized magic wand, clearly one made for a newbie.

Neither a magic tool nor a magic item.

"Well then, Lord Philemon. I'll leave the rest to you."

"Yes, Ariel-sama. Please be vigilant on your end as well... It won't surprise me if people began to notice what's amiss, do not remiss and provide your enemies a reason to strike."

"I understand."

Under the two guards' watch, their meeting came to an end.

Satisfied, they crossed the room toward the exit.

Luke followed, naturally keeping a step behind Ariel. Fitts hesitated momentarily before following Luke's example.

"Luke, take care of your responsibility to protect Ariel-sama."

"Yes!"

Leaving Luke with that those words, Philemon left the scene.

Luke bowed as custom and watched his leave.

"Phew... That took a while, let's eat."

"Yes, Ariel-sama."

Hearing Ariel's instruction, Luke rang a bell.

Ring ring ring, three times.

After instructing the maids who arrive on meal preparations, he returned to his place behind Ariel.

Fitts followed the development with some interest.

"When you ring the bell, are there rules governing how many times you rang?"

"What rules could there be, it's just a bell."

Luke's apathetic response disappointed Fitts, but he could only nod.

"Ah... Yes, of course."

Recently, Fitts had constantly inquired Luke about this and that.

Like meal etiquette or proper greetings.

Although Fitts knew more etiquette than most commoners, it's only at a level of making-do. That's why it's commonplace for him to do something that got the nobles snickering. But each time after being laughed at, he'd embarrassingly run over to Luke and find out what he done wrong. So next time he faced the same situation, he won't make the same mistake twice.

"Heheh..."

Listening in on the conversation, Ariel giggled.

"Recently, Fitts had gotten better with the palace etiquette."

"No, I'm still well short."

"Even so, your diligence is certainly endearing."

"Really? I thought all the nobles hated me."

Fitts looked at Luke with refrain, and Luke turned away to absolve himself from the conversation.

"Don't worry about the bickering among those busy bodies. I certainly approve of you."

".... Thanks."

He didn't display a particular excitement, but bowed gracefully toward Ariel.

"Say, Ariel-sama. Have you found the whereabouts of my teacher and family?"

Ariel lightly shook her head at the question.

"No..."

Fitts had some conditions before accepting the job as Ariel's Guardian Magician.

First, pardon her for the crime of breaking into the palace without permission.

Fitts suddenly appeared in the palace because of the Teleportation Incident. Even though she didn't do it voluntarily, but the truth remained she broke in unpermitted. It's an act that required punishment in accord to Aura Kingdom

laws.

The incident wasn't pursued further due to Ariel's personal wishes.

Since Fitts did save Ariel, it shouldn't be a problem in any chance.

The other condition was to help find Fitts's parents and friend.

Fitts came from the Fittoa Region and separated from her loved ones during the Teleportation Incident.

Normally this would fall under the purview of Fittoa Region Lord, the Head of the Boreas Family.

But with the loss of most of their territory with Fittoa Region disappeared, that family fell into a crisis. Those nobles with a bone to pick against them all took advantage and rushed to attack. Boreas family was already exhausted from merely protecting their own, so they had little to spare for finding their citizens that were lost in the world. While superficially an organization had been formed for the search, it's but an empty shell.

As such, Ariel took from her own funds to organize an independent search party to help with the search.

Speaking of which, among the First Prince Faction there was also a senior minister that contributed lavishly, to protect the Boreas Family and enlarging the search effort... but that's another story.

All in all, under those two conditions, Fitts became Ariel's Guardian Magician.

"Still no clue on your family's whereabouts, since those citizens were scattered all over the world."

"Ah... I see..."

Fitts's ears drooped, a sight one couldn't help but sympathize with.

Seeing him like this, Ariel also made a difficult expression.

"Fitts... I'm sorry, in my current capacity, there's little I could do."

"No, I won't know what to do with myself if I was alone, so I really appreciate all that you have done."

"..."

Seeing Fitts put on a brave face, Ariel pondered briefly, then suddenly pound her palm with a fist.

"Ah right, Fitts, come to my room tonight."

"Huh?"

The abrupt proposal caused Fitts to raise his voice.

"I heard you been having nightmares and mumbling in your sleep. Maybe we can fix it by having someone in bed with you?"

"But... But... I'm just a lowborn guard, and Ariel-sama a princess... Hey, Luke, say something!"

Hearing his name dragged into this, Luke looked at Fitts with a blunt expression.

"What's wrong? You're getting a reward!"

"A reward..."

"Well, rumors would surely spread... but you should be used to the palace bickering by now, so won't you be fine with it?"

Nobody present would took his side.

Realizing that, Fitts could only sigh.

Part 6

While Ariel and Philemon were plotting.

In another corner of the palace, another scheme was forming.

"Ariel's recent movements, your thoughts?"

In some room occupied two men.

One with soft, golden hair, a young man roughly 25 in age.

In his hand a Begaritt glass cup filled with wine made from fresh Milis grapes.

The other man was on the chubby side, some fifty in age.

On the fat man's thigh sat a half naked girl, his hand caressing her buttocks.

"Rather suspicious indeed..."

He eyed the blushing, downcast girl lecherously, but indifferent in his tone.

The young man was unfazed by the man's action.

Instead, he swirled the liquid in his cup, enjoying the aroma arose from his wine.

"You have to be more specific than that."

"I received intel that Ariel-sama inserted her people into the knighthood and the army."

"Knights and the army? Ariel, she's planning a coup?"

Hearing such response, the man shook his head, as he meandered his hand under the girl's underwear.

"Impossible, she's not that shortsighted. Merely building up her forces."

"But whether be the knighthood or the army. Neither of them held any political sway."

"Correct, your highness. But the knighthood and army are staffed by commoners most receptive to Ariel-sama's sway. That consideration might just be her first move."

"Em..."

"Since Ariel-sama lacked a force of her own."

The young man pondered.

Knighthood and the army both lacked any influence in politics.

Of course, the knighthood and army were also Asura Kingdom's most powerful militarily. But they were granted little in authority given their largely commoner origins.

On the flip side, because the ranks consisted of noble youths, they'd be difficult to replace.

If something was to happen in the Capital, the troops would be in control.

If a large part of rank side to Ariel, then the files would certainly side join her camp, given her popularity with the people.

If that was to happen, the moment of crisis would be ripe for a coup.

"Although a little wanton in the past, my little sister did have a good head on her shoulder."

The young man sigh, but the fat man boasted loudly in response, while continuing to toy with the girl's body.

"Not particularly, it's a desperate ploy."

The girl let out a gentle, seductive moan, and the man let out a smile.

"Still, a clever move to make. I always assumed that Notus runt to be a coward, but he turned out rather prescient."

"What do you plan to do?"

Hearing the young man's inquiry, the fat man finally let the girl out of his hand.

With the same hand, he dipped a finger into the wine glass, then dripped its purple liquid into the girl's mouth.

The girl did not struggle, but licked it instead.

"Nothing unexpected. Although I had only sat quietly for the past year, now that she had decided to make an enemy of your highness, what must be done is only natural."

"The meaning being?"

The fat man lifted his finger up to his own mouth to slobber it himself.

"You don't cut the saplings, but the one that planted them."

"... I see. Darius, I'm counting on you."

"I must obey, Grabell-sama."

First Prince Grabell and Senior Minister Darius.

With that their meeting concluded, their faces were ones of colluding officials and dirty businessmen.

The only outsider present was the slave girl sitting on Darius' thighs.

That girl's name was...

Part 7

With that, the scene turned to Ariel's bedchamber.

Fitts visiting so late at night, it's approaching bedtime.

He had a head full of steam.

"Well... Ariel-sama... I came as told..."

Before Fitts made his visit, he was taken to the bath by the maids. After the bath he was slathered in oil from head to toe, then changed into a soft pajama of excellent make.

"Welcome, the rest of you may leave."

Following Ariel's command, both maids took their leave with a bow.

In the dark room, only Ariel and Fitts remained.

"What's wrong? Come, sit by my side."

"Ah... Yes..."

According to Ariel's command, Fitts nervously planted himself beside her.

Ariel leaned her body against Fitts'.

"..."

The closer Ariel scoched over, the further Fitts retreated.

Nervously he raised a hand to break the ice.

"Well... We... are just going to sleep, right?"

"Why, of course."

"Well... It's that... Ariel-sama, you have a terrifying look on your face."

Slowly, Ariel crawled over, step by step she closed in.

Fitts panicked in retreat, desperately keeping his distance.

"Don't be afraid. Surely, seeing Fitts so nice and tender does excite me so, but fear not, I won't do anything to you. Now then, come to bed."

"No, Ariel-sama... You're even scarier now!"

"Nothing to be afraid of."

"No, but you see, I... Ariel-sama knows that right? I'm actually a..."

"I know, of course I know."

Fitts was finally cornered on the bed.

Ariel stretched her hand onto his shoulder and pushed him down.

"That's why, I also want Fitts to know me better."

Fitts closed his eyes, like a girl for her very first time.

No matter what. this was too much. Even though that's what he felt in his heart, he had relented to let Ariel do with his body as she pleased.

Ultimately, the Fitts without any home to return to could do little to deny Ariel.

"... I think the joke should stop here."

Suddenly, Ariel pulled herself away from Fitts. She lied to the side, her face up.

Surprised, Fitts turned his sight toward her, and coincidentally looked into Ariel's, face to face.

"Uhm..."

"Didn't I say we would only sleep tonight? Or were you expecting something more? Surely, you don't think I would force myself on you?"

Fitts was blushing from ear to ear.

Seeing that reaction, Ariel couldn't help but giggle.

"That reaction would make anyone pounce you, but really, only sleep tonight."

With that her face returned upward, and she let out a long sigh.

Full of confusion, Fitts didn't know what to do, his body remained stiff.

It stayed silent for so time.

"--- I also been..."

The one that broke the ice was Ariel.

"Dreaming."

"... Dreams?"

"Yeah, of that day that monster murdered Derrick, a nightmare of the beast tore me to pieces."

After hearing that, Fitts studied Ariel with a renewed interest.

Her usual soft and warm smile gone, the face expressionless, her face looked almost transparent.

"Nightmare, sleep talking, and waking up cold... Repeating day after day."

"Ariel-sama, you too?"

"Yes."

Nodding, Ariel grabbed on Fitts' hands.

Her fingers so slim and tender, seemingly ready to break at any moment.

But Fitts' were full of strength and life.

"Fitts, even though I can't share your pain, that day, you're not alone to experience horrors. If you ever had a tough time, people are here to help."

"Ariel-sama..."

"I could so bluntly asked for Fitts' aid, because I felt, if I were to sleep with my savior from that day, maybe the nightmares would go away."

Hearing those words, Fitts finally felt a sense of relief.

He finally realized that, since that day, he never gave his heart a moment of rest.

He realized how desperate he worked out of fear of being thrown away. How much he had been bluffing, in fear of being called useless and in hope of leaving a good impression.

"Really..."

But none of that was necessary.

Even if Fitts knew no magic, Ariel would stuck by his side. Because they're already comrades in arm.

"Ariel-sama."

"What is it, Fitts?"

"I'll work harder to become a guard worthy of Ariel-sama."

"That's the attitude. But first, please be a good guard in my dream."

Ariel giggled.

Infected by her laughter, a smile surfaced on Fitts's face.

His first smile in the year since the Teleportation Incident.

"Alright, sleep now."

"Yes, Ariel-sama. Good night..."

Continuing to hold Fitts's hand, Ariel shut her eyes.

Fitts also shut his, waiting for sleep to come take his conscious away.

But in that moment, he suddenly detected something.

"...?"

A movement.

Just before there're only two person present in the room, suddenly another stood by the bed.

A half naked girl, only partially clothed, hovered besides them.

In her hand wield a large dagger.

"...!"

When they crossed eyes, the girl made her move.

She quickly jumped, as if to land herself directly onto Ariel.

Fitts realized immediately that she was an assassin. Even before he could yell out, his body was already in motion. He jumped up in attempt to shield Ariel, while stretching both hands to unleashed "Air Blast."

"Kyah!"

The chantless magic landed a direct hit on the girl, pushing her body in the opposite direction.

"What is it!"

"Ariel-sama! An assassin! Please don't move away from me! Luke! Enemy attack!"

Fitts's shouting echoed throughout the room.

The Guardian Knight's room was immediately adjacent, so Luke quickly rushed over.

"Fuu..."

The assassin crawled back up.

Expressionless she looked at Fitts, then Ariel. Her sights shifting between them two, before finally settled on Fitts. Looked like the assassin settled on getting rid of the guard before the target.

Seeing his opponent's actions, Fitts lowered his center of gravity and readied his stance.

Still in pajamas, he didn't have any of Ariel's gifts equipped, but his fighting spirit did not waver.

"... Die!"

The assassin charged in directly toward Fitts.

Fitts raised his both hand to unleash magic.

"... Tsh!"

The magic he unleashed was invisible to the eye. An explosion followed, blowing away canopies and punctured a great hole through the wall.

Advanced Rank Magic, "Sonic Shockwave".

Few could survive a direct hit from it.

Yet the assassin somehow managed. Seemingly rushing toward Fitts, instead she suddenly leaped aside.

A feint.

Whether she intended or not, the assassin avoided Fitts's magic attack.

At the same time, the opponent also fired off a throwing dagger.

It flew directly at Ariel.

Instinctively Fitts stretched out his hand to intercept the dagger. Of course, catching a dagger midair was no simple task. But luckily, his fingertip caught the dagger. Although it inflicted a small wound, he successfully deflected its path.

Realizing that she just threw away her one chance at success, the assassin mousely sought to retreat, attempting to widen her distance from Fitts.

"Ah..."

But instead she was immediately hit by Fitts' second attack.

The advanced Wind Magic smashed all four of her limbs and blew her out the hole in the wall, into the night sky.

"Huu... Huu..."

Still heaving heavily from the surprise attack. Fitts looked out the hole into the moonless night. The night was dark, completely obscuring what lies below.

Considering he had already broke all her limbs as she fell, there's no way she could have survived the fall.

"Phew..."

The fact that he just killed someone hadn't caught up with him yet.

"Oh, yes... Ariel-sama, are you alright?"

Fitts hurried back into the room to affirm Ariel's safety.

"Ah.. Huh?"

Yet, after taking a half step, his legs would no longer do as told.

No feeling from his toes, Fitts felt a weakness from his legs, and he instantly fell.

(Poison...)

By the time Fitts realized it, it was already too late. Numbness coursed through his body and consciousness began to fade.

(Must use... detoxication magic...)

If Fitts was but a typical magician incapable of chantless detoxication magic, he would have already lost his life.

While fading in and out of consciousness, Fitts managed to apply detoxication magic on himself and observe his surroundings.

Ariel was fine. The assassin had already retreated, and Luke arrived on scene as well.

"Luke! An assassin! Fitts defeated the assassin, but he's been poisoned! Hurry and call the doctor! Also, the assassin's body should be below, so also call the guards!"

"Yes!"

Luke nodded, and immediately headed downstairs, while yelling for the guards.

With his consciousness fading, Fitts could only watch as he left.

Part 8

As such, this attempt on Ariel's life came to a close.

Even though Fitts fell to poison, only a minute amount had slipped into her wound. Due to his timely use of detoxication magic, his life was saved, and there was no ill effects.

When Fitts returned work, the nobles evaluation of him had changed.

The reason was his defeat of the assassin.

When the guards went to investigate her remains, they confirmed the girl as the famed assassin that terrorized Asura Kingdom for the past decade, "Night Eye of a Crow".

Until then, many Asura aristocrats fell victim to her.

For defeating an assassin of that caliber, they recognized Fitts's ability.

Since he could use chantless magic, as well rarely spoke, eventually he became known as "Silent Fitts". He finally gained the approval of all as Ariel's guard.

With that, the story came to a close, Ariel and the rest returned to their peaceful lives... at least on the surface.

In reality, the curtain did not close so cleanly.

Because since then, there were more attempts on Ariel's life.

One after another.

Even as Fitts defeated each, the attempts did not stop, and the culprit unknown. The knights' investigation was stonewalled as well.

Although she could guess at who employed the assassins, it wasn't enough to go public with. That caused her great deal of strain and mental stress.

Eventually, Philemon determined how precarious their situation. Under his

suggestion, Ariel took the excuse of studying aboard and fled the country...

But that's the story for another time.

Part 9

Guardian Magician Fitts

Suddenly homeless because of the Teleportation Incident, he lost control of his life. Despite his own reservations, he became engulfed in the bloody political struggle of Asura Kingdom.

But, there was a blessing in disguise.

Since that assassination attempt, Fitts no longer had nightmares.

That nightmare of being flung in midair, struggling terribly as he cratered toward earth...

For him, that was the only saving grace.

For him, there'll still be some time before his fated reunion with Rudeus Greyrat.

Translator's Notes and References